



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Louisiana, 1804

New Orleans, Louisiana

Master Angus O. Frazer

Originally named by the French to honor King Louis XIV, Louisiana was admitted to the Union 30 April 1812 as the 18th State.

Builder: Baltimore, Maryland

Rig:

Length: 70'

Beam: 22'

Draft: 6'

Displacement: 75 tons

Cost:

Commissioned: 1804

Disposition: Lost at sea with all hands, 19 August 1812

Complement:

Armament:

Cutter History:

Cutter: On June 18, 1804, the Treasury Department authorized the Baltimore customs collector to build a cutter for the newly acquired port of New Orleans. A Baltimore shipyard built the cutter during the summer and fall of 1804 and completes it by December of that year. *Louisiana* displaced about seventy-five tons; measured seventy feet in length; had a beam of twenty-two feet; and drew approximately six feet. The cutter set sail for New Orleans on December 16, 1804, and served out of New Orleans. On August 19, 1812, the local newspaper reported it lost with all hands on board during a severe hurricane.

Master: Angus O. Frazer received his commission as a master for revenue cutter service in Massachusetts on September 10, 1810, and began commanding *Louisiana* later in 1810. On November 25, 1812, Frazer (who was not on board

the cutter during the deadly hurricane) was dismissed for “arbitrary action and unjust conduct” for insulting behavior toward a merchant captain.

War of 1812 Events and Operations:

June 18, 1812. President James Madison signs a declaration of war and the War of 1812 officially begins. The congressional authorization states “*that the President of the United States is hereby authorized to use the whole land and naval force of the United States . . . against the vessels, goods, and effects of the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the subjects thereof.*”

August 11, 1812. *Louisiana* capsizes in its homeport of New Orleans during a severe hurricane. According to an eyewitness, “*I here give you a small account of the hurricane that took place here on the 11th inst. There were 70 sail of vessels in harbor, and upwards of half of them completely destroyed, with their cargoes on board—Flatboats, barges, and trading canoes are all destroyed. The shipping will cost their value to put them in repair fit for sea. The Revenue Cutter and all hands lost.*” While the cutter was lost, Captain Frazer was not lost with the ship and another cutter would not serve New Orleans until after the war.

[Note: Nearly a year later (September 27, 1813), Acting Treasury Secretary William Jones wrote the New Orleans customs collector, “*It is not thought advisable during the continuance of the existing state of things to authorize the procuring of another Revenue Cutter, but if you should be of the opinion, that the public interest will be promoted by the employment of an additional boat, you are at liberty to purchase one on the best terms practicable.*”]

October 10-12, 1812. Commanding an armed party and small boat on Saturday, October 10, Angus O. Frazer (formerly master of *Louisiana*) apprehends armed smugglers and their delivery boat near Barataria Bay. The smugglers manage to escape only to return the next day to capture Frazer, his men and the boat. Not bound or tied, Frazer and his men escape the smugglers on Sunday night while their captors press on to New Orleans to sell their illegal goods. Smuggling had been common in the Barataria Bay area for quite a while and would continue throughout the war.

October 22, 1812. Master Angus O. Frazer returns from a U.S. Army-led reconnaissance mission to uncover smugglers and survey outlying islands and bayous. During the mission, the patrol located two armed and un-flagged schooners on Barataria Bay. When approached, crews on board the two vessels showed contempt and disrespect toward the armed American patrol.

November 28, 1812. Treasury Secretary Gallatin writes New Orleans customs collector to dismiss revenue cutter master Angus O. Frazer. He was dismissed for “*arbitrary action and unjust conduct*” for insulting behavior toward a merchant captain named Grandson. In his letter, Gallatin wrote, “*he [the President] has directed that Capt Frazer be dismissed from his command as master of a*

Revenue Cutter, and you will accordingly be pleased to inform him that he is no longer considered as being in the public service."

August 24, 1813. Acting Treasury Secretary William Jones answers a New Orleans customs collector letter regarding "*smuggling & piratical establishment made by certain persons in defiance of the laws, at & near Lake Barataria*", authorizing the local naval commander to work with revenue officers to apprehend the smugglers and illegal cargoes, such as slaves.

September 27, 1813. Acting Treasury Secretary William Jones writes the customs collector at New Orleans "*The frequent violation f the revenue laws of the United States, by a daring & unprincipled band of pirates & smugglers has been long known to this department & by referring to the correspondence with your predecessor, you will perceive that he was instructed to apply to Govr. Claiborne & solicit his cooperation in arresting the further progress of the evil. I will not dissemble however that whilst the inhabitants of Louisiana continue to countenance this illegal commerce and the courts of justice forbear to enforce the laws against the offenders, little or no benefit can be expected to result from the best concerted measures.*"

March 30, 1814. New Orleans customs collector writes the Treasury Department, recounting an armed conflict between local smugglers and revenue officers and inspectors, who suffered injuries and property loss resulting from the fight.

August 8, 1814. Peace negotiations between the United States and Great Britain begin in Ghent, Belgium.

December 24, 1814. Peace treaty (Treaty of Ghent) signed between representatives of the United States and Great Britain at a ceremony in Ghent, Belgium.

January 4, 1815. In response to the destructive effects of the war on commerce, New England delegates to the Hartford Convention claim that "*Commerce, the vital spring of New England's prosperity, was annihilated. Embargoes, restrictions, and rapacity of revenue officers, had completed its destruction.*"

January 8, 1815. Americans defeat a British army in the Battle of New Orleans in the last major land engagement of the war.

February 11, 1815. Under the white flag, HMS *Favorite* (18) delivers the peace treaty, Treaty of Ghent, to New York City.

February 16, 1815. President Madison signs Treaty of Ghent officially ending the War of 1812.

February 25, 1815. Treasury Secretary Alexander J. Dallas issues a circular to all customs collectors regarding future policy in light of the conclusion of the war. In the two-page circular, he instructs, “[cutter] *officers and men must be recommended for their vigilance, activity, skill and good conduct.*” Dallas later directs that “*Smuggling, in every form, must be prevented, or punished. And if it be not prevented, the officers of the customs, according to their respective duties and stations, will be held answerable to prove, that there was no want of vigilance on their part.*” In the final paragraph, Dallas lists other duties to be carried out by the customs officials, hence their respective cutters, including “*immediate measures will be taken, for restoring the light-houses, piers, buoys, and beacons, within your district and jurisdiction, to the state in which they were before the war*”.

March 3, 1815. Congress repeals “*the acts prohibiting the entrance of foreign vessels into the waters of the United States*”, thereby repealing elements of the Non-Intercourse and Non-Importation acts.

May 30, 1815. Treasury Secretary Alexander Dallas writes the New York customs collector about building one or more schooner-rigged cutters to replace those lost in the war.

Sources:

Cutter History File, Coast Guard Historian's Office.

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